Please cancel claim 78 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

Please amend claims 57, 60-62, 64, 77, 79, 81-84, and 86 as follows.

1 – 56. (Cancelled)

57. (Currently Amended)  An image processing system comprising:

an image processing apparatus, which combines material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image;

an image storage apparatus; and

a communication channel between the image processing apparatus and the image storage apparatus;

wherein the image processing apparatus includes:

means for holding ~~scale-down images including~~ color information of each of a plurality of material images, ~~wherein the scale-down images correspond~~ the color information corresponding respectively to the plurality of material images, and the color information being retrieved from the image storage apparatus;

division means for dividing the original image into a plurality of blocks;

~~determination~~ selection means for selecting subsets of the material images out of the plurality of material images ~~determining selected material images and their positions~~ such that ~~the selected~~ each subset of the material images ~~have~~ has color information similar to color information of ~~respective blocks~~ a corresponding block of the plurality of divided ~~from the~~

- 2 -

~~original image~~ <u>blocks</u> based on the color information of each of the plurality of material images

and the color information of each of the plurality of <u>divided</u> blocks; and

first output means for outputting ~~the positions of~~ <u>identifications of</u> the ~~selected~~

<u>subsets of the</u> material images ~~determined~~ <u>selected</u> by the ~~determination~~ <u>selection</u> means to the

image storage apparatus via the communication channel, and

<u>combining means for combining material images,</u>

wherein the image storage apparatus includes:

storage means for storing the plurality of material images; and

second output means for outputting ~~the selected~~ <u>the subsets of the</u> material images

~~determined~~ <u>selected</u> by the ~~determination~~ <u>selection</u> means out of the plurality of material images

stored in the storage means according to the ~~positions~~ <u>identifications</u> of ~~the selected~~ <u>the subsets</u>

<u>of</u> the material images output by the <u>first</u> output means via the communication channel<u>, and</u>

<u>wherein the combining means combines the subsets of the material images output by the</u>

<u>second output means.</u>

58. (Cancelled)

59. (Previously Presented)  The system according to Claim 57, wherein the color

information corresponding to the plurality of material images is obtained from a plurality of

scale-down images or a plurality of image characteristic parameters corresponding to the plurality

of material images.

60.  (Currently Amended)  The system according to Claim 57, wherein the image processing apparatus further includes receiving means for receiving ~~first~~ the color information corresponding to the plurality of material images from the image storage apparatus.

61.  (Currently Amended)  The system according to Claim 60, wherein the receiving means receives the ~~first~~ color information corresponding to the plurality of material images during activation of the image processing system.

62.  (Currently Amended)  The system according to Claim 57, wherein the storage means stores the plurality of material images by dividing the plurality of material images into a plurality of groups, and the ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~ selects the ~~selected~~ subsets of the material images ~~and their positions~~ according to ~~first~~ the color information corresponding to a plurality of material images contained in a selected group.

63.  (Previously Presented)  The system according to Claim 60, wherein the receiving means receives a mosaic image generated by the first output means.

64.  (Currently Amended)  The system according to Claim 60, wherein the image processing apparatus receives ~~the selected~~ the subsets of the material images ~~determined~~ selected by the ~~determination~~ selection means from the image storage apparatus by the receiving means and arranges ~~the selected~~ the subsets of the material images received by the receiving means according to the positions ~~determined~~ selected by the ~~determination~~ selection means to form a mosaic image.

65. (Previously Presented)  The system according to Claim 57, wherein a plurality of the image processing apparatus are provided and the image storage apparatus can be shared between the plurality of image processing apparatus.

66 - 76. (Cancelled)

77. (Currently Amended)  An image processing apparatus that combines a plurality of material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image, comprising:

holding means for holding color information of each of a plurality of material images, the color information corresponding respectively to the plurality of material images and the color information being retrieved from an image storage apparatus;

division means for dividing the original image into a plurality of blocks;

~~determination~~ selection means for

(i) ~~determining color information for each of the plurality of blocks divided from the original image,~~

(ii) ~~determining color information for each of the plurality of material images, and~~

(iii) selecting ~~one of the plurality of~~ subsets of the material images ~~to be~~ out of the plurality of material images, each subset of the material images being associated with each of the plurality of blocks divided from the original image, such that ~~the color information of a selected one of the plurality of material images is similar to the color information of each of the plurality of blocks divided from the original image; and~~ each subset of the material images has color

- 5 -

information similar to color information of a corresponding block of the plurality of divided

blocks;

first output means for outputting ~~positions~~ identifications for each of the ~~selected~~ subsets

of material images associated with each of the plurality of blocks divided from the original image

to [[an]] the image storage apparatus via a communication channel between the image processing

apparatus and the image storage apparatus; and

means for combining the subsets of material images output by the image storage apparatus

that outputs the material images corresponding to the identifications output by the first output

means.


78. (Cancelled)


79. (Currently Amended) An image processing system comprising:

an image processing apparatus according to claim 77; and

[[an]] the image storage apparatus,

wherein the image storage apparatus includes:

storage means for storing the plurality of material images; and

second output means for outputting the selected material images ~~determined~~

selected by the ~~determination~~ selection means out of the plurality of material images stored in the

storage means according to the ~~positions~~ identifications of the selected material images

~~determined by the determination means~~ output by the first output means.


- 6 -

80. (Previously Presented)  The image processing apparatus according to claim 77, wherein the color information corresponding to the plurality of material images is obtained from a plurality of scale-down images or a plurality of image characteristic parameters corresponding to the plurality of material images.

81.  (Currently Amended)  The image processing apparatus according to claim 77, further comprising receiving means for receiving ~~first~~ the color information corresponding to the plurality of material images from the image storage apparatus.

82.  (Currently Amended)  The image processing apparatus according to claim 81, wherein the receiving means receives the ~~first~~ color information corresponding to the plurality of material images during activation of an image processing system.

83.  (Currently Amended)  The image processing system according to claim 79, wherein the image storage means stores the plurality of material images by dividing the plurality of material images into a plurality of groups, and

wherein the ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines the selected~~ selects the subsets of material images ~~and their positions~~ according to ~~first~~ the color information corresponding to a plurality of material images contained in a selected group.

84.  (Currently Amended) The image processing apparatus according to claim 81, wherein the image processing apparatus retrieves the selected material images determined by the ~~determination~~ selection means from the image storage apparatus by the receiving means and

arranges the selected material images received by the receiving means ~~according to the positions determined by the determination means to form a mosaic image~~.


85.  (Previously Presented) The system according to Claim 79, wherein a plurality of the image processing apparatus are provided and the image storage apparatus can be shared between the plurality of image processing apparatus.


86.  (Currently Amended)  An image processing apparatus that combines a plurality of material images to generate a mosaic image in imitation of an original image, comprising:

holding means for holding color information of each of a plurality of material images, the color information corresponding respectively to the plurality of material images and the color information being retrieved from an image storage apparatus;

division means for dividing the original image into a plurality of tiles;

~~determination~~ selection means for

(i) ~~determining average density information for each of the plurality of tiles divided from the original image,~~

(ii) ~~determining average density information to be associated with each of the plurality of material images, and~~

(iii) selecting ~~one of the plurality of~~ subsets of the material images out of the plurality of material images, each subset of the material images being for each of the plurality of tiles divided from the original image, such that ~~the color information of a selected one of the plurality of material images is similar to the color information of each of the plurality of tiles~~

- 8 -

~~divided from the original image; and~~ each of subset of the material images has color information similar to color information of a corresponding divided tile of the plurality of divided tiles;

first output means for outputting ~~positions~~ identifications for each of the ~~selected~~ subsets material images associated with each of the plurality of tiles divided from the original image to [[an]] the image storage apparatus via a communication channel between the image processing apparatus and the image storage apparatus; and

means for combining the subsets of material images output by the image storage apparatus that outputs the material images corresponding to the identifications output by the first output means.